Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A retraction device adapted to temporarily reposition body tissues and organs during a surgical procedure, comprising:

a malleable continuous ring member comprising a plurality of bending portions adapted to be twisted, folded, bent or deformed with respect to a plurality of bending axes to configure the ring member in a flattened, low-profile configuration to be inserted into a surgical incision, the ring member defining a plane when in the low-profile configuration; and

a membrane having a planar top surface, a planar bottom surface, and an outer perimeter wherein the ring is attached to one of the top surface of the membrane or the bottom surface of the membrane such that the membrane stretches across the ring member ~~positioned across the ring member and fixedly attached around the perimeter of the ring member~~,

~~wherein the membrane is substantially taut such that the membrane defines a substantially planar surface that is one of coplanar with and parallel to the plane of the ring member when the ring member is in the low-profile configuration~~.

2. (Previously presented) The retraction device of claim 1, wherein the membrane is a flexible fabric operable to retain the body tissues and organs of different shapes and sizes.

3. (Currently amended) The retraction device of claim 1, wherein the membrane is capable [[to]] of retaining both hard and soft body tissues and organs during surgery.

4. (Previously Presented) The retraction device of claim 1, wherein the bending portions and the membrane being configured to securely hold and separate hard tissues and organs yet are flexible enough to gently retain soft tissues and organs so as not to damage the tissues and organs or affect their circulation.

5. (Previously presented) The retraction device of claim 1, wherein the membrane is transparent.

6. (Previously presented) The retraction device of claim 1, wherein the membrane is sized and configured to stretch and recover to the shaping and reshaping of the ring member.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Previously presented) The retraction device of claim 1, wherein the membrane is formed of any elastic material that responds to the shaping and reshaping of the ring member.

9. (Previously presented) The retraction device of claim 1, wherein the ring member has an oval cross-section providing a preference for bending along the long axis.

10. (Previously presented) The retraction device of claim 1, wherein the ring member has a substantially square cross-section providing equal preference to bending in both axes or planes and resistance to bending diagonally.

11. (Previously presented) The retraction device of claim 1, wherein the ring member has a circular cross-section.

12. (Previously presented) The retraction device of claim 1, wherein the ring member further comprises an internal lumen defining a wall.

13. (Previously presented) The retraction device of claim 12, wherein the wall has a circular cross-section or a cross-section of any geometric shape providing a desired bending bias.

14. (Previously presented) The retraction device of claim 12, wherein the ring member further comprises a reinforcement member placed within the lumen to provide additional bending bias.

15. (Previously presented) The retraction device of claim 14, wherein the reinforcement member comprises at least a plastic component and a metallic component.

16. (Original) The retraction device of claim 15, wherein the metallic component includes at least one of aluminum, titanium and stainless steel.

17. (Previously presented) The retraction device of claim 14, wherein the reinforcement member is placed in some sections of the ring member to keep said sections substantially straight.

18. (Previously presented) The retraction device of claim 14, wherein the reinforcement member comprises a shape memory material including Nitenol.

19. (Previously presented) The retraction device of claim 1, wherein the ring member comprises a plurality of cords, said cords are vertically joined at a point along vertical axes of the cords.

20. (Previously presented) The retraction device of claim 19, wherein the cords have oval cross-sections.

21. (Previously presented) The retraction device of claim 14, wherein the reinforcement member has a first cross-section and the ring member has a second cross-section different in shape from the first cross-section.

22. (Previously presented) The retraction device of claim 21, wherein the first cross-section of the reinforcement member is rectangular and the second cross-section of the ring member is circular.

23. (Previously presented) The retraction device of claim 14, wherein each of the ring member, the reinforcement member and the wall has a cross-section or a profile of any geometric shape to provide a desired bending bias in a preferred plane.

24. (Previously presented) The retraction device of claim 21, wherein the reinforcement member imparts a different bending bias on the ring member.

25. (Previously presented) The retraction device of claim 14, wherein the ring member further comprises a second lumen and a second reinforcement member placed within the second lumen.

26. (Currently Amended) A method for operating a retraction device adapted to reposition body tissues and organs during a surgical procedure, comprising the steps of:

providing a malleable continuous ring member having a plurality of bending portions and a membrane having a planar top surface, a planar bottom surface, and an outer perimeter wherein the ring is attached to one of the top surface of the membrane or the bottom surface of the membrane such that the membrane stretches across the ring member ~~positioned across the malleable ring member and fixedly attached around the perimeter of the ring member~~, said bending portions adapted to be twisted, folded, bent or deformed with respect to a plurality of bending axes to configure the ring member in a flattened, low-profile configuration to be inserted into a surgical incision such that the ring member defines a plane when in the low-profile configuration ~~and such that the membrane is substantially taut and defines a substantially planar surface that is one of coplanar with and parallel to the plane defined by the ring member when the ring member is in the low-profile configuration~~;

inserting the ring member positioned in the low-profile configuration into the surgical incision to provide an operable area; and

twisting, folding, bending or deforming the bending portions of the ring member during the surgical procedure to reposition the body tissues and organs.

27. (Previously presented) The method of claim 26, further comprising the step of removing the ring member from the operable area by twisting, folding, bending or deforming the bending portions and pulling them through the surgical incision after surgery.

28. (Previously presented) The method of claim 26, wherein the membrane is a flexible fabric operable to retain the body tissues and organs of different shapes and sizes.

29. (Previously presented) The method of claim 26, wherein the membrane is capable of retaining both hard and soft body tissues and organs during surgery.

30. (Previously presented) The method of claim 26, wherein the ring member further comprises an internal lumen defining a wall.

31. (Previously presented) The method of claim 30, wherein the wall has a circular cross-section or a cross-section of any geometric shape providing a desired bending bias.

32. (Previously presented) The method of claim 30, wherein the ring member further comprises a reinforcement member placed within the lumen to provide additional bending bias.

33. (Previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the reinforcement member comprises at least a plastic component and a metallic component.

34. (Previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the reinforcement member is placed in some sections of the ring member to keep said sections substantially straight.

35. (Previously Presented) The retraction device of Claim 1, wherein the membrane is a bias woven or knitted fabric.